

## Relief from an Abnormal Course Condition – Cart Path

Abnormal course conditions include interference by animal holes, ground under repair, immovable obstructions, and temporary water, from which you get free relief (Rule 16.1).

### 16.1.a When Relief Is Allowed

Interference exists when any one of these is true:

- The player's ball touches or is in or on an abnormal course condition,
- An abnormal course condition physically interferes with the player's area of intended stance or area of intended swing, or
- Only when the ball is on the putting green, an abnormal course condition on or off the putting green intervenes on the line of play.

If the abnormal course condition is close enough to **distract** the player, but does not meet any of these requirements, there is **no interference** and no relief under this Rule.

Cart paths and paved roads are common abnormal course conditions that you can take relief from, and this rules document explains that.

**Remember:** Your first option is to play the ball as it lies. So, unless you first mark it, *do not move* your ball until you have made your final decision, which might be to hit it from the cart path or road.

## Taking Relief

Determine the nearest point of complete relief, the estimated point where the *ball* would lie that is:

- Nearest to the ball's original spot, but not nearer the hole than that spot,
- Where the condition (cart path here) does not interfere with the stroke the player would have made from the original spot if the condition was not there.

**Measuring Club.** A club-length is the length of the longest club in your bag (driver but not putter).

The headcover cannot be used in that left, but does not have to be removed.

**Substituted ball:** Any time you are taking relief, including both free and penalty relief, you can drop a *substituted ball* or the original ball in a particular relief area. [Rule 14](#)

[[USGA video](#): Nearest point of complete relief (1:09)] | [[USGA video](#): Taking relief from a cart path (1:31)]

**Definitions:** [interference/relief area](#); [abnormal course conditions](#); [animal holes](#); [ground under repair](#), [immovable obstruction](#), [temporary water](#)

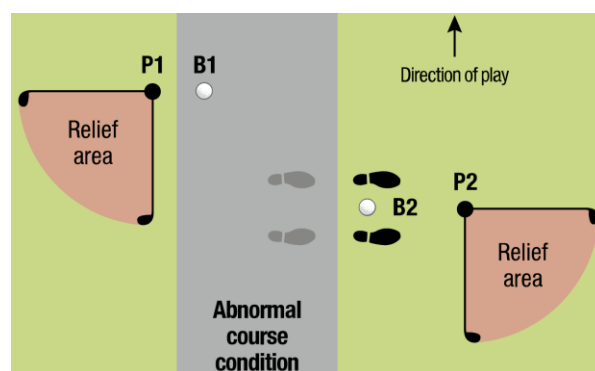


Diagram 1

B1 and B2: Position of a ball on a road  
P1 and P2: Nearest point of complete relief

When your ball is in the middle of the cart path (right-handed player).

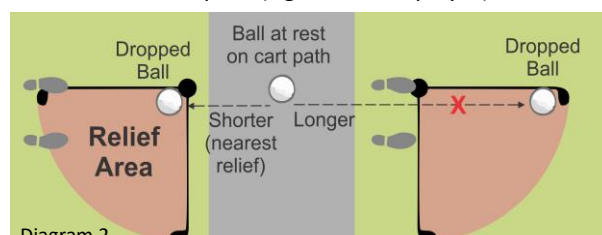


Diagram 2

In the 2019 edition of the Rules of Golf, "point of nearest relief" was changed to "point of nearest complete relief."